DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 260 847 PS 015 333

AUTHOR Phillips, Tyler D.; And Others
TITLE Work Place Impact of Working Parents. Preliminary Report.
INSTITUTION Child Care Systems, Inc., Lansdale, PA.
PUB DATE Mar 85
NOTE 10p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Day Care; Early Childhood Education; *Employed Parents; Employee Attitudes; *Job Performance; Questionnaires
IDENTIFIERS *Absenteeism (Employee)

ABSTRACT

Intended for employers requiring facts about the child care problems of their working-parent employees, findings reported here relate primarily to the amount of work time which working parents devote to child care. Specifically discussed are frequency of care changes, time spent finding care, work time missed by working parents, consideration given by working parents to leaving the job force, and care location preference. This report is based on a study of 1,243 working parents in Southeastern Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey who completed the Child Care Systems' questionnaire. Concluding remakrs indicate that the impact of child care on the workplace is equivalent to 8 days per year in lost time: 9 hours on average to locate care, 1 person day per year each in tardiness and phone calls, and 5 days in absenteeism. These costs in time add up to nearly a 3 percent extra cost for working parent employees in contrast with non-parent employees. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED260847

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

PRELIMINARY

REPORT ON THE

WORK PLACE IMPACT

OF

WORKING PARENTS

Child Care Systems, Inc.

329 W. Main Street

Lansdale PA 19446

1-800-VIP-KIDS

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
John Michael Willmann
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

March 15, 1985

PS 015333

PREFACE

> "Today's work force is experiencing the consequences of a generation of social change. One of the important aspects of the new work situation is the need of more employees than ever before for child care while they work. The situation has developed with the rapid rise in the number of dual-career families, single parents, working parents with young children, and the sheer numbers of young children." [1]

For example, in the national workforce:

- right now 60% of all mothers with dependent children work;
- by 1990 two-thirds all of employees, male and female, will be parents of dependent children;
- right now 44% of those who work are women and 80% of them will become pregnant at some point in their careers;
- half of the working women who leave their jobs to have children will return to work within one year.

Moreover, child care is not only increasingly necessary, it can often be expensive. Typically, for families in which both parents work, child care costs average 10% of family income and are a working family's fourth largest annual expense.

Regionally, ow many parents bear this expense? In the Delaware Valley 1 of every 2 employees has children and needs child care and in the service sector the number rises to 3 out of every 4.

Working women are often the most directly affected by child care problems. And again the magnitude of the difficulties they face is reflected in their number. In Southeastern Pennsylvania

alone there are over 73,000 women in the labor force with at least one child under age six and over 65,000 just in Philadelphia who work and have school-age children.

> "Workstyles and lifestyles of families have been changing. In most families, no longer is the huband devoting his time soley to work while the wife devotes all her time to the children and the household. The roles are merging, with the result that both working parents have demanding work responsibilities. Employment policies and benefits can be altered to accomodate family responsibilities."[2]

Child care, which has been called the "benefit of the 1980s and 1990s", by Margaret Heckler, Secretary of Health and Human Services, is expected to be among the fastest growing benefits in years to come.

Clearly, because of this country's increasingly diverse work force, company-provided benefits are moving away from the uniformity typical of the Industrial Age toward a multiplicity suitable for today's more heterogeneous labor force. Simply stated, as a nation we are now technically equipped for a benefit philosophy that gives the separate segments of the work force what they need.[3] And clearly quality child care is a benefit which a substantial and growing number of that work force needs.

Unfortunately, child care is not easy to locate or manage. For example, when a working parent attempts to locate child care providers from among the 2,600 licensed or registered providers in the Delaware Valley, that parent will find only 1 out of 6 listed

in easily accessible publications such as the Yellow Pages.

While human resource planners in all sectors of the economy have been intuitively aware of the growing need for quality child care and the difficulty working parents have in finding and managing it, there has been little information on the work place impact of working parents' child care needs.

It was widely perceived that until this work place impact could be quantified, little could be done to address the issue.

This was the dilemna faced by Child Care Systems, Inc. in 1983 as it set out to aid employers in responding to the issues of their working parent populations.

Child Care Systems recognized that employers would require facts about the child care problems of their working parent populations. In order to gather the data, Child Care Systems developed a detailed questionnaire designed to help working parents in their search for child care while offering employers needed information. It is data from this questionnaire which is summarized in this report.

Tyler D. Phillips
President
Child Care Systems
March 1, 1985

FINDINGS

The findings reported here relate primarily to the amount of work time which working parents allocate to child care. The time allocated is segregated to time spent finding child care, and to that spent managing child care once it has been located. Additionally, this report addresses the amount of conflict which is caused by the dual roles of parent/employee. This report is based on a study of 1,243 working parents who live in Southeastern Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey and who completed the Child Care Syscems' questionnaire.

FREQUENCY OF CARE CHANGES

The questionnaire findings indicate that almost 51% of the responding parents make new child care arrangements one or more times during a twelve month period. This data clearly supports the widely-held belief that finding child care is not a one time activity, but rather one that is often repeated.

TIME SPENT FINDING CARE

Selecting the appropriate child care involves parental time and effort. Of the individuals responding to the question on how much time it took to find child care, the average amount of time spent was determined to be 8.8 hours for each change in care. The 8.8 hours were spent placing phone calls, making visits to potential care providers, and discussing arrangements with friends. Those are activities which typically need to be undertaken during

the work day.

According to the respondents, finding child care is a lengthy process, both in the duration of the search time and in actual hours spent arranging care. Seventy two percent of the respondents reported that it took one week or more to find care, with nearly one in four families requiring more than a week to locate care.

WORK TIME MISSED BY WORKING PARENTS

There is an on-going impact on the workplace that stems from child care issues even after care has been found according to the study results. Individuals reported that they missed an average of 5.4 work days each year due to child care problems. These problems range from sick children, to illness of provider, to problems with transportation, to school holidays. In order to receive compensation for these days, the resposnding employees reported them as vacation days (34%), sick days (30%) or personal days (25%).

In addition to missing work days altogether, the average employee reported losing slightly more than eight hours per year due to leaving early or arriving late because of child care related problems. Twenty seven percent of the individuals responding indicated that during work hours they call or are called once a week or more with questions about their children, from their children, or to make adjustments in their child care arrangements.

And a full 30 percent of the working parents estimated that they are late to work or must leave early because of a child care problem twice a month or more. It is clear from these findings that child care related problems are causing employees to miss time while at work and to miss actual work days.

WORKING PARENTS CONSIDER LEAVING JOB FORCE

Thirty nine percent of those individuals responding to the study said they have actually considered leaving their jobs because of child care issues. It is important to note that all respondents were still employed and at the time they were responding to the survey had not left their jobs because of child care problems. It is not possible from this questionnaire to either determine or estimate percentages of those who actually did leave their jobs.

CARE LOCATION PREFERENCE

The questionnaire addresses many other issues of interest and concern to parents about child care such as criteria for child care selection. Some additional information that gives an employer valuable input when considering child care options and company involvement in child care issues includes preferences in location and type of care. The study shows that 75% of the responding parents prefer child care near their home rather than near work. Responding parents prefer a variety of child care setting for their children. Twenty eight percent prefer center-based

care; 30% prefer family day care homes; 28% prefer care in their own home; the remainder prefer school-based care.

CONCLUSION

By 1990, it is estimated that more than two thirds of the workforce will be working parents. If the findings of this report are any indication, the child care issue is not going to disappear for employers, but rather can only grow in scope and impact.

ANNUAL LOST TIME BY WORKING PARENTS

In summary, the information gleaned from this study demonstrate that the workplace impact of child care is the equivalent of eight days a year in lost time: nine hours on average to locate care, a person day per year each in tardiness and phone calls, five days in absenteeism. These costs in time alone add up to nearly a 3% extra cost for working parent employees over non-parent employees.

It appears that employers have a major challenge in responding to the child care issue.

FOOTNOTES

1. Employer Supported Child Care, Sandra L. Burud, Pamela R. Aschbacher, & Jacquelyn McCrosky, Auburn House, 1984, ISBN 0-86569-122-3.

2. Employers and Child Care: Establishing Services Through the Workplace, US Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, Kathryn Senn Perry, August 1982, #23.

3. "Child Care Benefits: Past the Infancy Stage", Compensation & Business Management, Winter 1985, p. 127 et seq.